

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

GIOVANNI NENCIONI ET AL

U.S. Serial No. 10/591,392

Group Art Unit 1788

Filed: September 1, 2006

F. Ducheneaux, Examiner

MULTI-PLY PAPER PRODUCT OR THE
LIKE, METHOD FOR THE PRODUCTION
THEREOF AND RELATIVE SYSTEM

Alexandria, Virginia
December 23, 2011

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

R E S P O N S E

Dear Sir:

This is in response to the official action mailed July 27, 2011. Applicants have considered the outstanding official action. It is respectfully submitted that the claims are directed to patentable subject matter and in condition for allowance as set forth below.

The outstanding rejections based on art are as follows:

- (1) Claims 63-65, 68-75 and 82 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,287,676 B1 (Ruppel);

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- (2) Claims 77-78 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruppel in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,221,211 B1 (Hollenberg);
- (3) Claims 79-81 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruppel in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,599,614 B1 (Roussel);
- (4) Claim 83 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruppel in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,755,928 B1 (Biagiotti);
- (5) Claims 84-85 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruppel in view of Roussel; and
- (6) Claim 125 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruppel.

Claims 63 and 125 are the sole rejected independent claims. Ruppel is the only reference applied against each of claims 63 and 125 in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The other rejected claims are dependent directly or indirectly on claim 63. These dependent claims are rejected over Ruppel in combination with a secondary reference, i.e., Hollenberg (claims 77-78), or Roussel (claims 79-81 and 84-85) or Biagiotti (claim 83), which are relied on with respect to additional limitations in the dependent claims. Thus, if Ruppel is overcome, all the rejections are overcome. Applicants respectfully submit that Ruppel does not teach or suggest applicants' claimed web material.

Ruppel teaches an absorbent product composed of preferably two embossed sheets 1, 2 of absorbent material. The sheets are assembled in the known manner of nested or tip-to-tip. As described and shown in Ruppel, a single glue applicator 110 applies glue to sheet 1. Sheet 1 is then joined to sheet 2 as both move through the nip formed by rollers 101 and 105. Ruppel further states simply that a "third sheet can be sandwiched between the two embossed ones without thereby exceeding the scope of the invention" (column 2, lines 65-67). No further description of an embodiment having three sheets is set forth or shown. Thus, no description is provided as to whether or not the third sheet has glue applied thereto, or, if so, the position or placement of the glue in relation to the embossments. In view of the conventional manner of application of glue to nested or tip-to-tip embossments and the specific glue application process and apparatus disclosed in Ruppel, glue would be applied to sheet 1 in a quantity to allow seepage of the glue from the sheet of application to the third sheet and second sheet. No other means of glue placement is taught. There is insufficient teaching as to material structure, application technique and apparatus in Ruppel to suggest applying glue directly on both opposing outer plies, in particular on mutually staggered protuberances which are

not in contact with each other and which are glued on opposite sides of a sandwiched third sheet present therebetween.

Accordingly, even assuming for the sake of argument, that Ruppel teaches or suggests a multi-ply web material composed of three sheets and that the third sheet is somehow glued to another ply or plies, applicants claimed multi-ply web material includes further limitations clearly not taught or suggested by Ruppel, in particular that the sheet is double-faced in that the two outer faces of the multi-ply web material have different embossed patterns and an adhesive is applied to decorative elements of each of the different patterns in a manner so that there is separation (no overlapping) of the glued areas as between the two different patterns. This claimed structure allows the two faces of the multi-ply web material to be differently patterned. The third or intermediate ply is strongly anchored to both outer plies by direct gluing (i.e., not simply by seepage of glue through more than one ply) by glue being applied in separate areas, i.e., in the separate patterns, on both of the first and second plies. Ruppel does not provide any teaching or suggestion to modify the structure taught in Ruppel to obtain these additionally claimed features.

Claims 63 and 125, the only independent claims, clearly require

- a first ply forming a first outer surface having a first pattern composed of first decorative elements,

- a second ply forming a second outer surface having a second pattern composed of second decorative elements,

- wherein the first decorative elements and the second decorative elements are different and distributed with respect to each other so that the decorative elements of one ply are intercalated or staggered between the decorative elements of the other ply,

- a third ply interposed between the first and second plies,

- a first adhesive applied to at least some protuberances defining the first decorative elements,

- a second adhesive applied to at least some protuberances defining the second decorative elements,

- the first and third plies being adhesively bonded at least at the areas where the first adhesive is applied, and

- the second and third plies being adhesively bonded together at least at the areas where the second adhesive is applied.

Accordingly, due to these structural features, the web material as claimed by applicants provides improvements

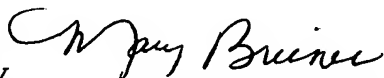
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not achievable by Ruppel, e.g., improved appearance due to different patterns on different outer surfaces which are not visible from the other side, and different location of protuberances which allows different placement of adhesive without introduction of the adhesive into the intermediate layer or opposite outer layer. Therefore, the structural features of claims 63 and 125 provide a double-face product, i.e., a product which has two sides characterized by entirely different patterns, decorations and tactile properties, which cannot be obtained from the teachings of Ruppel. Thus, the claims are not rendered obvious in view of Ruppel. As set forth above, the secondary references are only relied on for teaching additional limitations present in dependent claims and, thus, do not make up for the shortcomings of Ruppel. Withdrawal of the §103 rejections is, therefore, requested,

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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